

Plagiarism, Quoting and Paraphrasing

Adapted from United International College *Academic Reading & Writing Student Coursebook, Semester 2, 2008/2009*, by Victoria Steven

Plagiarism: Definition

To “plagiarize” means to use a passage, sentence, outline, or even a group of phrases from the Internet, a book, or any other source, without telling where you “borrowed” from. Plagiarism is a crime because it violates the author’s intellectual property rights; many schools also seriously punish plagiarism because it “hurts honest students” by giving the cheater an unfair advantage over students who do not cheat. (Krigline, 2008)

Exercise: Write “yes” if you think a situation in the table below *is* plagiarism and “no” if you think it *isn’t* plagiarism.

1	Direct duplication by taking material from a book or website etc. and making people think you wrote that material.	
2	Copying another’s work, for example another student’s assignment and making people think you wrote it yourself.	
3	Using parts of several other people’s work and joining them together without telling where you got them from.	
4	Rewriting another’s work using many of your own words but keeping the other writer’s meaning, important parts of the ideas in their words and keeping their organization of ideas and points without telling where you got them from.	
5	Handing in work that you have done with a group of peers without acknowledging that it is not your individual work.	
6	Using quotation marks (“xx xxx”), citations and references to document text that you copy directly from the source.	
7	Using citations and references to document text that you <i>paraphrase</i> from the source.	

Quoting: Definition

Quoting is when you copy something word-for word. It is OK as long as you put it in quotation marks (“ ”) or, for longer quotations, if you set it off from the rest of your text by indenting it on both sides. Of course you must always say where you got the quotation. See the examples in this paper.

Paraphrasing: Definition

The Study & Learning Centre at RMIT in Australia says:

A paraphrase is when you write published materials in your own words without changing its original meaning. It is usually about the same length as the original... It is important that the sentence structure and the vocabulary are not too similar to the original.

The main way to paraphrase is to:

- change the structure of the paragraph
- change the words.

It is not enough to do just one of these, you need to change the structure **and** the words. You must do this to avoid plagiarism.

Paraphrasing Example

Carefully read the Original Passage, Important Ideas and Model Paraphrase below to get an idea of how paraphrasing works.

Original Passage

This is the original text copied directly from the *Contemporary Topics 1* lecture audioscript:

“Finally, the third personality factor is that happy people have good relationships with other people. They try to have close, loving relationships with friends and family. Studies show that close, loving relationships are one of the most important factors in achieving happiness. So happy people don’t spend all their time building their careers or trying to make money. They also spend time on building relationships with friends and family.” (Kisslinger, 2003, p. 24)

Note that the passage is in quotation marks (“xx xxx”) and its source has been added in the parentheses after the quotation. This is called a *citation*. Citations are very important because they are the way you tell where you got your information.

Important Ideas

Let’s first identify the important ideas in this passage:

- Happy people have close and loving relationships with friends and family.
- Research shows relationships one of most important factors in happiness.
- Work on personal relationships as well as careers

Model Paraphrase

This is how the Original Passage has been paraphrased by using the Important Ideas:

Research shows that relationships are one of most important factors in happiness. Happy people have close and loving relationships with relatives and friends. They balance their time by building relationships with friends and family rather than spending all their time working. (Kisslinger, 2003, p. 24)

Comments: This paraphrase is effective because in addition to changing both the wording and sentence structure, it includes all points and retains the meaning of the original passage. It also changes the order of ideas.

Also note that there are no quotation marks (you only use quotation marks if you copy something directly) but the source still has to be cited.

Paraphrasing Exercise

On a separate sheet of paper, (1) list the important ideas and then (2) paraphrase this paragraph using the example above as a model:

“One benefit is that genetically modified plants may need fewer pesticides than normal plants. For example, there is a type of corn that is bad for insects – when the insects eat the corn plant, they die. However, the corn doesn’t hurt people. This type of corn is beneficial because farmers use fewer pesticides to grow the corn, and so there is less pollution in the environment. Also, the corn is less expensive because the farmers don’t have to spend a lot of money on pesticides.” (Kisslinger, 2003, p. 25)